

Remarks to the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce in
Manchester, New Hampshire
October 9, 2003

Thanks for the warm welcome. It's good to be back in New Hampshire again. I've spent some quality time here. *[Laughter]* It's good to see many of our friends. It seems like Manchester is a popular destination place these days—*[laughter]*—not just because the leaves are changing. *[Laughter]* This city was the scene of my first great victory in 2000, the perfect flip at the Presidential Pancake Flip-off. *[Laughter]* I would suggest some of our other fellow Americans practice. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank the Chamber and the Business Industry Association for inviting me here today to talk about two great priorities of our country, to create jobs for America and to win the war on terror.

I wish Laura was with me today. She sends her best wishes. You might remember that she has recently been on a diplomatic mission. She went to Russia, and she was in France. Perhaps you saw the picture—*[laughter]*—of her in France. *[Laughter]* Last time I was in France, I got a nice welcome but nothing like that. *[Laughter]* She's such a great representative for our country. I'm really proud to call her wife. I love her dearly.

I want to thank Raymond for his kind introduction. I appreciate Harold Turner as well for letting me come. Thank you all for coming. I traveled from Pease Air Force Base with your fine Governor and First Lady, Denise. Craig, I'm proud to call you friend. Thank you for serving your great State. I'm also here with my buddy Judd Gregg and his wife, Kathy. Don't mess with Kathy. *[Laughter]*

I'm also honored to be here with a fine United States Senator, John Sununu. I appreciate you coming, John. Congressmen Charlie Bass and Jeb Bradley flew down from Washington with me today. I know the mayor of Manchester and the mayor

of Nashua are here with us today. I'm honored you are here. Members of the executive council are here; State representatives are here; State senators are here. The attorney general is here. There are a lot of people here that I need to thank. I appreciate you coming and giving me a chance to visit with you.

When I landed today in Manchester, I met a fellow named Robert Perkins. He is one of the thousands of citizens who volunteer in your State. I like to point out people like Robert Perkins, because it gives me a chance to remind our fellow citizens that our true strength is not our military might. Our true strength is not the size of our wallet. The strength of this country is the heart and soul of fellow citizens who are willing to love a neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

Robert Perkins volunteers at the Boys and Girls Club here in Manchester. He helped create the chapter in 1995. He has dedicated 5 to 10 hours each week over the past 5 years. My call to our citizens is, in order to make America as hopeful and promising a place as possible, help somebody who hurts. Put your arm around somebody in need. And for those of you who already do so, like Robert Perkins, thank you for being patriots.

Since I was last here, New Hampshire lost one of its finest citizens, Governor Hugh Gregg. He loved his country, and he served it well. He loved this State, and he believed in the common sense and wisdom of its people. This tradition continues in his good family. We honor Hugh Gregg's memory, and my family was proud to be his friend.

I began my visit this morning at Pease, with the New Hampshire Army and Air Guardsmen and reservists from every branch of our military. New Hampshire

guardsmen have served on every front of the war on terror, from Afghanistan to Iraq to protecting our homeland to guarding the detainees at Guantanamo Bay. I went to tell them how much I appreciated the fact that they are showing what it means to be patriots and citizens. I told them that our country is grateful for their service.

America is being tested. We're being tested abroad, and we are being tested here at home. And we're meeting the tests of history. We're defeating the enemies of freedom. And at the same time, we're confronting challenges to build the prosperity of our Nation. Every test of America has revealed the character of America. After 2 years, no one in the world, friend or foe, can doubt the strength or the will of the American people.

When you become the President, you can't predict all the challenges that will come. But you do know the principles you bring to office, and they should not change. They shouldn't change with time, and they shouldn't change with polls. I took this office to make a difference, not to mark time. I came to this office to confront problems directly and forcefully, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations.

The challenges we face today cannot be met with timid actions or bitter words. Our challenges will be overcome with optimism and resolve and confidence in the ideals of our country.

Because we believe in our free enterprise system, we can be confident in our economy's future. Our economy has been through a lot, been through some tough times. When I took office, the stock market had been declining for 9 months, and the economy was headed into a recession. And just as we started to recover, the enemy attacked us on September the 11th, and that struck a blow to our economy. And then investor confidence was shaken by scandals in corporate America—dishonest behavior we cannot and we will not tolerate in our America. And then we faced the

uncertainty that preceded the battles of Afghanistan and Iraq.

We have acted to overcome all these challenges, and I've acted on principle. See, Government doesn't create wealth. The role of Government is to create the conditions where risktakers and entrepreneurs can invest and grow and therefore hire new workers. I've acted to create the conditions for job growth. See, I understand that when Americans have more take-home pay to spend, to save, or invest, the whole economy grows, and someone is more likely to find a job.

And so I twice led the United States Congress to pass historic tax relief for the American people. We wanted tax relief to be as broad and as fair as possible, so we reduced taxes on everyone who pays taxes. I don't think it makes sense to penalize marriage in the Tax Code. We want to reward and honor marriage. And so we reduced the marriage penalty. We understand it takes a lot of—to raise a family and to educate a child, so we increased the child credit to \$1,000. This summer I said the check would be in the mail, and it was.

It's counterproductive to discourage investment, especially during an economic recovery. So we quadrupled the expense deduction for small business investment and cut tax rates on dividends and capital gains. It is unfair to tax the estates people leave behind after a lifetime of saving and building up their business or running the family farm. When you leave the world, the IRS shouldn't follow you. So we're phasing out the Federal death tax.

I proposed and signed these measures to help individuals and families, but I also know the effect it would have on small businesses. See, most small businesses in America pay taxes under the individual income tax rates. Most small businesses are sole proprietorships or Subchapter S corporations, and so when you cut all taxes, you benefit the small-business owner in America. And when you couple that with the higher expense deductions, we've really

put the wind under the sails of small businesses. And that's important, because small businesses create most new jobs in our country. They're usually the first to take risks and the first to hire new people. The tax relief plan we passed helps small businesses, which helps economic growth, which means it's more likely somebody is going to find a job.

The actions we're taking are helping people. We've cut the taxes on 112,000 small-business owners in New Hampshire. We've reduced the marriage penalty for 192,000 couples. We've increased the child tax credit for 124,000 families. I understand this, that New Hampshire citizens can better spend their own money than the people in Washington.

We're following a clear and consistent economic strategy, and I'm confident about the future of this country. Last month, the economy exceeded expectations and added net new jobs. Inflation is low. After-tax incomes are rising. Homeownership is at record levels. Productivity is high, and it is rising. Factory orders, particularly for high-tech equipment, have risen over the last several months. Our strategy has set the stage for sustained growth. By reducing taxes, we kept a promise, and we did the right thing at the right time for the American economy.

Just as our economy is coming around, some are saying now is the time to raise taxes. To be fair, they think any time is a good time to raise taxes. *[Laughter]* At least they're consistent. But I strongly disagree. A nation cannot tax its way to growth or job creation. Tax relief has put this Nation on the right path, and I intend to keep this Nation on the path to prosperity.

We are moving forward, but we cannot be satisfied. We can't be satisfied, so long as we have fellow citizens who are looking for work. Here in New Hampshire, one out of every five jobs that have been lost are manufacturing jobs. And that's a problem. I believe we must act boldly to stem the tide of job loss. So I'm asking Congress

to join me in carrying out a six-point plan for jobs for America.

Businesses are more likely to hire people if the health care for workers is affordable. We need to allow association health care plans, where small businesses can pool risk and gain the same bargaining power as big businesses. And in order to control health care costs, we need effective legal reform, medical liability reform at the Federal level.

Defensive medicine against frivolous lawsuits runs up the Federal budgets. It increases the cost of Medicare and Medicaid and veteran health benefits. Medical liability reform is a national problem that requires a national solution. The House has passed a good bill. It is stuck in the Senate. Senators must understand no one has been healed by a frivolous lawsuit in America.

Unfair lawsuits are also harming a lot of good and honest employers. There are too many large settlements that leave plaintiffs with a small sum and lawyers with a fortune. Class actions and mass tort suits that reach across State lines should be tried in a Federal court so lawyers cannot shop around looking for a favorable judge. And most of the money in a judgment or settlement should go to those who have actually been harmed, not the lawyer. A good bill has passed the House. It is stuck in the Senate. We need class action tort reform out of the United States Senate.

Our economy will grow stronger and create more jobs if we have a sound national energy policy. The manufacturing sector of New Hampshire and around our country need reliable sources of energy. We need better infrastructure. We need to modernize the delivery of electricity and natural gas so cities and businesses and employers are not left in the dark.

We'll continue to give low-income people help with their fuel bills this winter. We must use our technology to develop plain and efficient energy sources so we can sustain economic growth and protect the environment. We need more energy production close to home. For the sake of national

security and for the sake of economic security, America must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy. We passed a good bill out of the House and the Senate. They must come together and get a bill to my desk before they go home for Christmas.

Most people will find jobs when employers don't have to waste time and resources complying with needless Government regulations. For the sake of American workers, we're cutting unnecessary rules and making some of the rules still on the books simpler to understand. This administration understands that small-business owners should spend more time building companies and pleasing customers and less time filling out the endless forms the Federal Government requires.

To create jobs, we are pursuing free trade agreements that will open up markets for New Hampshire products. Last month, I signed trade agreements with Singapore and Chile, and we are working toward other free trade agreements across the globe. Expanded trade will help New Hampshire companies like Len-Tex and Warwick Mills and Tender to sell more goods, which will mean more jobs and better jobs for New Hampshire workers. I will insist that for free—not only will we have free trade but that there be a level playing field, that the people with whom we trade treat America fairly. I firmly believe that when the rules are fair, American workers and entrepreneurs can compete with anybody, anyplace, and anytime.

There is one more thing we need to do. We need to make sure that all the tax relief we have passed doesn't disappear in future years. See, there's a quirk in the legislation. The tax cuts that we passed are scheduled to go away unless we act. The child credit will drop in several years. The death tax that we put to extinction will pop back up 10 years after enactment. In other words, there's uncertainty in the Tax Code. See, Americans hear about tax relief. They don't expect to see higher taxes sneak

through the back door. For the sake of job creation, for the sake of people looking for work, the United States Congress should make every one of the tax cuts we passed permanent.

We have a responsibility to set good policies in Washington, and we are. Yet the real strength is found in the creativity and the entrepreneurial spirit of the American people. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in this country. It's one of the great aspects of our national character. And that's why I'm so confident about the future of our economy.

Brain Stowell is here. He's a second-generation entrepreneur based in Claremont, New Hampshire. I met Brian backstage. His family owned a cabinetmaking company called Crown Point Cabinetry, which started by his dad, Norm, in a garage, 25 years ago. Brian said, "If you talk about me, make sure you talk about my dad, Norm."

Now that business employs 90 people. From the garage to now being an employer of 90 people, that's what America is all about. This year, four—this week, Brian added four new workers. Most new jobs in America are created by small-business owners. In the next 2½ years, he plans on adding 25 workers. Folks working now not only know they'll have a job, but they're about to be joined by other working with them.

He says the tax cuts helped a lot. That's his words, not mine. Because of tax relief, he's putting more than \$800,000 of his company's money at work in new equipment. See, he's made a decision. Tax relief, it creates demand. In a market-oriented economy, when there's more demand, somebody meets that demand with a service or a product. And when somebody meets that demand with a service or a product, somebody is more likely to find work.

He's going to buy a new router, made in North Carolina. There's a router-worker who's going to be a—benefit from his decision caused by tax relief. He's going to

buy a sander made in Minnesota, spray booths made just outside of Boston, Massachusetts, a forklift made in Iowa, more than a dozen other pieces of equipment, nearly all of them made here in America. The tax relief encouraged Brian to make an investment. And when he makes an investment, not only will it help his company be more productive, the people who are making the equipment for Brian to purchase are more likely to find work and keep work.

He's an optimist. He's an optimist because he believes in the people in this country. Here's what he said. He said, "After September the 11th, everybody collectively held their breath, but our confidence has grown. We've turned a corner." Confidence like that is well-founded. We live in a country that rewards big dreams and honest effort. My job is to keep the entrepreneurial spirit alive and well through good policy in Washington, DC.

As we overcome challenges to our economy, we are also answering great threats to our security. September the 11th, 2001, moved our country to grief and moved our country to action. We made a pledge that day, and we have kept it. We're bringing the guilty to justice. We're taking the fight to the enemy. And we now see that enemy very clearly. The terrorists plot in secret. They kill the innocent. They defile a great religion. And they hate everything America stands for. These committed killers will not be stopped by negotiations. They won't respond to therapy or to reason. The terrorists who threaten America cannot be appeased. They must be found; they must be fought; and they must be defeated.

We are in a different kind of war than we're used to. We're in a new war, and it requires a new strategy. We're not waiting for further attacks. We're striking our enemies before they can strike us again. We've taken unprecedented steps to protect our homeland, yet wars are won on the offensive. And America and our friends are staying on the offensive.

We are rolling back the terrorist threat, not on the fringes of its influence but at the heart of its power. We're making good progress. We're hunting the Al Qaida terrorists and their allies wherever they hide, from Pakistan to the Philippines to the Horn of Africa to Iraq. Nearly two-thirds of Al Qaida's known leaders have been captured or killed. Our resolve is firm and clear: No matter how long it takes, all who plot against America will face the justice of America.

We have sent a message understood throughout the world, "If you harbor a terrorist, if you support a terrorist, if you feed a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorists." And the Taliban found out what we meant. Thanks to our great military, Afghanistan is no longer a safe haven for terror. Afghanistan is free. Many young girls now go to the school for the first time in Afghanistan, and the people of America are safer from attack.

And we fought the war on terror in Iraq. The regime of Saddam Hussein possessed and used weapons of mass destruction. He sponsored terrorist groups, inflicted incredible terror on his own people. Nearly every nation, every nation, recognized and denounced this threat for over 10 years. The U.N. Security Council, in Resolution 1441, demanded that Saddam Hussein disarm, to prove his disarmament to the world or face serious consequences. The choice was up to the dictator. He chose poorly.

I acted because I was not about to leave the security of the American people in the hands of a madman. I was not about to stand by and wait and trust in the sanity and restraint of Saddam Hussein. So in one of the swiftest and most humane military campaigns in history, we removed the threat. Six months ago today, the statue of the dictator was pulled down.

Since the liberation of Iraq, our investigators have found evidence of a clandestine network of biological laboratories, advance design work on prohibited longer range missiles, an elaborate campaign to

hide illegal weapons programs. There's still much to investigate. Yet it is undeniable—undeniable—that Saddam Hussein was in clear violation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441. It's undeniable that Saddam Hussein was a deceiver and a danger. The Security Council was right to demand that Saddam disarm, and we were right to enforce that demand.

Who can possibly think that the world would be better off with Saddam Hussein still in power? Surely not the dissidents who would be in his prisons or end up in his mass graves. Surely not the men and women who would fill Saddam's torture chambers or rape rooms. Surely not the families of victims he murdered with poison gas. Surely not anyone who cares about human rights and democracy and stability in the Middle East. There's only one decent and humane reaction to the fall of Saddam Hussein: Good riddance!

Our country faces a choice. After all the action we have taken, after all the progress we have made against terror, there is a temptation to think that danger has passed. The danger hasn't passed. Since September the 11th, since that fateful day here in America, the terrorists have taken lives in Casablanca, Mombasa, Jerusalem, Amman, Riyadh, Baghdad, Karachi, New Delhi, Bali, and Jakarta. The terrorists continue to plot. They continue to plan against our country and our people. America must never forget the lessons of September the 11th.

America cannot retreat from our responsibilities and hope for the best. Our security will not be gained by timid measures. Our security requires constant vigilance and decisive action. I believe America has only one option. We must fight this war until our work is done.

We're fighting the war on terror on many fronts, and Iraq is now the central front. Saddam holdouts and foreign terrorists are trying desperately—desperately—to undermine Iraq's progress and throw the country into chaos. Terrorists in Iraq believe their attacks on innocent people will weaken our

resolve. That's what they believe. They believe we'll run from a challenge. They're mistaken. Americans are not the running kind.

The United States did not run from Germany and Japan following World War II. We helped those nations to become strong and decent and democratic societies that no longer wage war against America. And this is our mission in Iraq. We're rebuilding schools. We're rebuilding hospitals. Thousands of young kids have received immunizations recently. We're returning electricity and water to the good people of that country.

We have pride in this help not only because our hearts are good, because our vision is clear. A stable and democratic and hopeful Iraq will no longer be a breeding ground for terror and tyranny and aggression. Free nations are peaceful nations. Our work in Iraq is essential to our own security. And no band of murderers and gangsters will stop that work or shake the will of America.

Nearly every day, we're launching swift precision raids against the enemies of peace. Helped by intelligence from the Iraqis, we're rounding up the enemy and taking their weapons. We're working our way through the famous deck of cards. We've already captured or killed 43 of the 55 most wanted former Iraqi leaders. The other 12 have a lot to worry about. Anyone who seeks to harm our soldiers can know that our soldiers are hunting for them. Our military is serving with great courage. Some of the best have fallen. We mourn every loss. We honor every name. We grieve with every family. And we'll always be grateful that liberty has found such brave defenders.

In defending liberty, we are joined by more than 30 nations now contributing military forces in Iraq. Great Britain and Poland are leading two multinational divisions. And in this cause with fine allies must be included the good people of Iraq. They want a peaceful country. They want security for their families.

Last week, the first battalion of the new Iraqi army completed its training. Within a year, Iraq will have 40,000 members in their military force. Tens of thousands of Iraqi citizens are guarding their own borders and defending vital facilities and policing their own streets. We're making good progress in Iraq. Six months ago, the Iraqi people welcomed their liberation—6 short months ago. And today, many Iraqis are armed and trained to defend their own liberty.

Our goal in Iraq is to leave behind a stable and self-governing society which will no longer be a threat to the Middle East or to the United States of America. We're following an orderly plan to reach this goal. Iraq now has a Governing Council which has appointed interim government ministers. Once a constitution has been written, Iraq will move toward national elections. We want this process to go as quickly as possible. Yet, it must be done right.

The free institutions of Iraq must stand the test of time. And a democratic Iraq will stand as an example to all the Middle East. I believe, and the Iraqi people will show, that liberty is the hope and the right of every land. I do not believe freedom is America's gift to the world. Freedom is God's gift to every individual in the world.

Our work in Iraq has been long and hard, and it is not finished. We will stay the course. We will complete the task. And beyond Iraq, the war on terror continues. There will be no quick victory in the war on terror, but if we persevere, victory is certain.

I'm confident of victory because I know the character of our country and our military, shown in the conduct of young men like Army Sergeant Matthew DeWitt of Hillsboro, New Hampshire. While serving in Iraq, Sergeant DeWitt stepped forward to volunteer on a dangerous mission to root out Saddam loyalists. In the fighting, he was seriously wounded. He's now receiving care at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC. I was honored

to visit him. He was awarded the Purple Heart. He doesn't consider himself a hero. He just says, "I was just doing my job." Yet it is great people like this 26-year-old from New Hampshire who protect us. We count on them, and we're proud of them.

The war on terror has brought hardship and loss to our country, beginning with the grief of September the 11th. Let us also remember that the first victory in this war on terror came that same day on a hijacked plane bound for the Nation's Capital. Those men and women on Flight 93, knowing they would die, found the courage to use their final moments to save the lives of others. In those moments and many times since, terrorists have learned about the courage of America and that we will not be intimidated. We will fight them with everything we have.

Few of us are called to show the kind of valor seen on Flight 93 or on the field of battle. Yet all of us share a calling to be strong in adversity and unafraid of danger. We Americans have come through so much together, yet there is a lot to do. And if we're patient and united and determined, this Nation will not only prosper; this Nation will be secure as we prevail in the war against terror.

Thank you for letting me come today, and may God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:03 p.m. at the New Hampshire Holiday Inn-Center of New Hampshire. In his remarks, he referred to Raymond E. Pinard, chairman of the board, Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce; Harold Turner, Jr., chairman, board of directors, Business and Industry Association; Gov. Craig Benson of New Hampshire and his wife, Denise; Mayor Robert A. Baines of Manchester, NH; Mayor Bernard A. Streeter of Nashua, NH; New Hampshire State Attorney General Peter W. Heed; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.